

Review and Herald, March 3, 1885, Advent Experience--No. 4

"The Shut Door and Kindred Matters" p. 1, par. 1, [NUM4].

Perhaps there has never been anything connected with the Advent movement that our enemies have tried harder to use to our reproach than the shut door doctrine. We propose to examine this matter quite closely, and to give the facts concerning it, for the benefit of those of our people who are not familiar with them. We shall find them very different from what they are represented by our enemies. p. 1, par. 2, [NUM4].

We have stated how earnest and devoted the believers were previous to the passing of the time, and the bitter reaction which followed. All was zeal and earnestness and activity before, but sorrow, disappointment, and perplexity followed. The bitter hatred against the doctrine of Christ's soon coming, manifested by many church members, resembling that of the Jews against the disciples because they believed in Christ's first advent, was strong evidence to the believers that the Spirit of God was withdrawn from them. They had done their utmost to warn the world, and knew that God had blessed them in their work. They knew the doctrine was founded upon the rock of eternal truth--the Word of God. Therefore they knew that those who bitterly opposed the work were fighting against God. p. 1, par. 3, [NUM4].

As the time passed there was a general feeling among all the earnest believers that their work for the world was done. Day by day they were still waiting, watching, and longing for the appearing of the Saviour, not knowing why He tarried. At this time no one gave credence to their advent views, or manifested the slightest interest to listen to them. They were considered fanatics because they would not give up their belief after their disappointment. p. 1, par. 4, [NUM4].

The great change, manifested in the almost fiendish spirit of the opposers, and that in their own feelings relative to laboring for the salvation of souls, together with the bearing of certain texts of Scripture, led them to the conclusion that their work for the world was done. Mr. Miller and others believed that the door would be shut a short time before Christ came. In a letter to Elder J. V. Himes, October 6, 1844, he said: "I am strong in the opinion that the next will be the last Lord's day sinners will ever have in probation. And within ten or fifteen days from that time they will see Him whom they hated and despised to their shame and everlasting contempt."

This was very natural in view of such texts as Revelation 22:11, 12: "He that is unjust let him be unjust still; he which is filthy let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous let him be righteous still; and he that is holy let him be holy still. And behold I come quickly." No doubt probation will close some little time previous to the appearing of Jesus. p. 1, par. 5, [NUM4].

When the midnight cry ended and the time passed, they felt that the last great test was reached. This was the universal feeling at the time. Their intense burden for souls had ceased. The Satanic spirit around them made the matter still more clear to their minds. p. 2, par. 1, [NUM4].

After the time passed, Mr. Miller in another letter addressed to Elder Himes says: p. 2, par. 2, [NUM4].

"We have done our work in warning sinners and in trying to awaken a formal church. God in His providence has shut the door. We can only stir one another up to be patient and to be diligent to make our calling and election sure. We are now living in the time specified in Malachi 8:18 (also Dan. 12:20, Rev. 22:10-12). p. 2, par. 3, [NUM4].

"In this passage we cannot help but see that a little while before Christ should come, there would be a separation between the just and the unjust, between the righteous and the wicked, between those who love his appearing and those who hate it. And never since the days of the apostles has there been such a division line drawn as was drawn about the time of the seventh Jewish month. Since that time they say they have no confidence in us. We have need of patience after we have done the will of God, that we may receive the promise." p. 2, par. 4, [NUM4].

In another letter published in the *Advent Herald* **where???, he says: "I did believe, and must confess that I do now, that I have done my work in warning sinners, and that in the seventh month." p. 2, par. 5, [NUM4].**

George Needham, another prominent Adventist minister, says in the *Voice of Truth*, March 19, 1845: p. 2, par. 6, [NUM4].

"I am and have been convinced since the tenth day of the seventh month that our work for the world and the foolish virgins is done. I must deny that glorious movement as being the work of God, or I can come to no other conclusion. That I can never do. The foolish virgins have gone to the old establishments where they sell oil, and are crying to us to come after them, and the world are with them to buy a little oil, and shall we

go to them with the hope of doing them any good? "Not lest we die." p. 2, par. 7, [NUM4].

J. B. Cook, another prominent Adventist, says in "Advent Testimony": "If the Advent cause and people be worthy of divine interposition, or this the era to expect the Lord, then we are down through the shut door in that representation of Advent history. My language to many has been, I believe in the shut door just as you have *experienced* it." p. 3, par. 1, [NUM4].

We have given these extracts from prominent Adventists, none of whom were in what we call the third angel's message. We could quote many others who taught similar sentiments, and who acted a leading part in the great '44 movement. There can be no question that for months after the time passed it was the general sentiment that their work of warning the world was over. They felt so because: p. 3, par. 2, [NUM4].

(1) They believed the proclamation in the past was a fulfillment of prophecy, a solemn announcement that "the hour of God's Judgment is come," the Lord having signally blessed the movement and those who were connected with it. They could not question the truthfulness of this without denying their faith. p. 3, par. 3, [NUM4].

(2) The attitude assumed by those who rejected the message was bitter and wicked, like those who rejected Christ; which was clear evidence to them that they had rejected important light and truth. They felt therefore that God had rejected them. p. 3, par. 4, [NUM4].

(3) Their own position and feelings made the matter still more clear. They had an intense burden of soul before for all classes, and labored incessantly to warn them and save them, pouring out their means lavishly and willing to make any sacrifice to do so. They felt in their souls that it was the Spirit of God that impelled them to do this. Now they felt entirely different. Their burden was gone, and they thought their work was done. Besides, there were none who desired their labor. Under these circumstances, was it strange that they should feel that "the door was shut" as God's Word said it would be at a certain point? How could they have felt otherwise unless they threw away all their wonderful experience? p. 3, par. 5, [NUM4].

But as the months passed by after the passing of the time, believers began to doubt and to give up their past experiences. Prominent men, like George Storrs, did so, and within six months large numbers had become unsettled. The leaders began to look around for some new ground to stand upon. Instead

of waiting patiently, and finding the true light in the Bible explanation of the heavenly sanctuary and the third angel's message, they demonstrated their lack of true faith by unsettling the old advent landmarks and giving up the great movement as fanaticism. True faith is always shown in times of darkness and persecution, perplexity and unpopularity. With most of them there was a great lack, as the result demonstrated. Doubtless this was the reason God permitted them to pass through this experience. p. 3, par. 6, [NUM4].

For six years in succession some Adventists moved the time for the termination of the 2300 days of Daniel 8. The result brought disappointment and confusion among them. But the true and faithful believers did not participate in this foolish work. Many of the old laborers began to talk of going forth to "re-arouse the slumbering churches" which had rejected the light. But their success was not encouraging. In 1843 and 1844 loud calls were made to give up the work of God as a mistake, mesmerism, etc. p. 4, par. 1, [NUM4].

April 29, 1845, there was a large meeting of Adventists at Albany, New York. Leading laborers were present, and over fifty preachers. Plans were formed to go to work as they had done before the passing of the time. Strong expressions were indulged in concerning the great movement of the past. Elder J. V. Himes was reported by those present as saying, "The seventh month movement produced mesmerism seven feet deep." That which they themselves had in the past acknowledged as the Spirit of God impelling them to work and sacrifice in His cause; that which had produced a solemnity and depth of spiritual experience not known for centuries, was now denounced as *mesmerism*. p. 4, par. 2, [NUM4].

From that point the great mass of the Adventist body began to lose their power. Distraction came into their midst. Biting and devouring one another became the order of the day, and soon that large body of over 50,000 Adventists which came out of the popular churches upon the cry of "Babylon is fallen," began to disintegrate, split up into divisions, and gradually to go to pieces, till they have largely lost their influence in moving people to believe in the coming of Christ. Like the foolish virgins, they lost the *oil*--the Spirit of God-- took ground against the past advent work, the Sabbath and the true work of God, and their course has been most sad and discouraging. p. 4, par. 3, [NUM4].

But there were honest souls scattered here and there who would not, could not, follow them in this course. They still prayed for light, held on to the old

pillars of the faith, and believed God would open the way before them. Of their experience I will speak further.-- G.I.B. p. 4, par. 4, [NUM4].